

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for Senate bill 840, Next Generation Connecticut.

I am J. Larry Renfro, Ph.D., Professor and Head of the Department of Physiology and Neurobiology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UConn, Storrs.

For more than 38 years it has been my privilege to teach and to train both undergraduates and graduate students in research at the University. I have witnessed the transforming effects of the State's investment in higher education on both the infrastructure and student achievement. The sincerity, dedication and ambition of the students continues to impress me year after year.

My department is research-intensive (about \$247,000 in grant funds per tenure-track faculty member per year) providing research experiences for undergraduates as well as graduate students, and this brings the insight of cutting-edge science to the classroom. Proud examples of our success include:

- 1) Vladimir Coric, Jr., M.D., Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Yale OCD Research Clinic; Director, Global Clinical Research-Neuroscience, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, Wallingford. Dr. Coric got his start in research as an undergraduate at UConn which led to his first peer-reviewed scientific publication. Another example, is
- 2) John Leamon (a 1998 PNB Ph.D.), currently Vice President of Biological Research and Development for CyVek Corporation in Wallingford, CT. CyVek currently has 18 employees and plans in the coming year to expand to 36 employees. John is looking for students with B.S. and M.S. degrees in the STEMs and recently traveled to the UConn to recruit applicants. The list is lengthy, but my time with you is not.

The biological sciences at Storrs have greatly benefited from the UConn 2000 era. Faculty hired since the initiation of this investment have been at the very top of their particular research area, obtained significant extramural grant funding, and have maintained a high level of scientific productivity. However, the popularity of the biosciences has put greater demands on science faculty. Many of our courses are core requirements for majors in Biomedical Engineering, Allied Health, Nursing, and other pre-healthcare professional majors. Enrollments in these areas have gone up dramatically in the last ten years. The resources provided by Next Generation Connecticut will help assure that the educational needs of professions vital to the economic future of the State are met.

Thank you.

I am happy to answer questions.